March Comes in Like a Lion

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PUBLISHED BY HAKUSENSHA (2010/04)
VOLUME 4 ISBN 978-4-592-14514-1

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Chapter. 36

Bottom of a Blue Night

3月のライオン

March comes in like a lion

Chica Umino

What is this?
Man, that's sweet.
This oage is too sweet.
It's not supposed to be candy for crying out loud.
Ah.
—BUT THIS ONE HAS MINCED WASABIZUKE IN IT...
GEEZ! WITH ALL THESE DIFFERENT FLAVOURS, I CAN'T STOP!
Kyah
WHAT IF I GET FAT?!
You decided to come with me on your own and you started eating on your own. but you're complaining...? Really.....?
THERE'S NO USE TELLING ME THAT...

BWYS NOTE: OAGE IS THE THIN DEEP FRIED TOFU THAT WRAPS INARIZUSHI

HMM.
OKAY,
THE SECOND LAYER IS VEGETABLE STUFF...
CHIKU-ZENNI? IT'S LIKE SOMETHING AN OLD GRANNY MAKES.
SHE'S TRYING TOO HARD. THIS SCREAMS, "LOOK HOW HOMEY I AM! ☆" DOESN'T IT?
LIKE, "OH, A GUY LIVING ALONE MUST BE STARVING FOR THINGS LIKE THIS"?
—NEXT, WE GOT OKRA AND BROCCOLI...
HMM.
BOILED IN SESAME OIL AND SALT...
NAMUL STYLE, HUH?
SFX: PORI PORI..... (CRUNCH CRUNCH.....)

BWYS NOTE: CHIKUZENNI IS A DISH MADE OF BRAISED CHICKEN AND VEGETABLES USUALLY EATEN AROUND NEW YEARS. NAMUL IS A GENERAL TERM FOR A KOREAN SEASONED VEGETABLE DISH.

KYOUKO, SHOULDN'T YOU BE GETTING HOME SOON?
MOTHER IS GOING TO HAVE DINNER WAITING...
SFX: SHAKU SHAKU SHAKU (CRUNCH CRUNCH CRUNCH)
SFX: MOGU MOGU (MUNCH MUNCH)
SFX: PERO (LICK)
SFX: SHAKU SHAKU (CRUNCH CRUNCH)
SFX: SHAKU SHAKU SHAKU SHAKU (CRUNCH CRUNCH CRUNCH CRUNCH)
SFX: MOGU MOGU (MUNCH MUNCH)
HYOI HYOI (POP POP)
PAKU PAKU (CHOMP CHOMP)
HYOI (POP) PAKU (CHOMP)

HUUUUUHHH?!
EMPTY
Uh...
Ugh.
I can't mooove...
My skirt's so tight.
So... painful...
SFX: GAH (CLACK)
Hey, what're you doing?!!
Don't open that!
OH, LAY OFF, GEEZ.
I'LL JUST CALL HIM LATER.
REI, LEND ME SOME CLOTHES. DO YOU HAVE A JERSEY OR SOMETHING?
MADE ME SLEEPY.
BEING FULL... HAS KIND OF...
UGH.
I'M GOING TO SLEEP NOOOW.
WASN'T FATHER MAD AT YOU JUST A LITTLE WHILE AGO?!
Won't you just go home?!
ポイポイポーイ
Aaaah,
geeez!
SFX: POI POI POPOOOOI (TOSS TOSS T-TOSSSS)
SFX: BASSAAAAH (WHOOOSSH)

HAAAAH.
MUCH BETTER.
HEY, WHICH GIRL IS IT?
HUH?
IS IT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL-ER?
OR WAIT, DON'T TELL ME...
NOT THE MARRIED WOMAN, RIGHT?!
What?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!
SFX: SHARA... (SWISH...)
SFX: ZUZUHH (SLUUURP)

HUH?
THE GIRL SHE WAS CARRYING WAS HER LITTLE SISTER, YOU KNOW?
SO HER NAME'S AKARI? HMMM.
WELL, NOT THAT IT MATTERS.
MARRIED WOMAN...? OHH...
DO YOU MEAN AKARI-SAN?
MIDDLE SCHOOLER.
KUNTCH
THOSE THREE ARE SIBLINGS.
HUUUH?
—SPEAKING OF WHICH, AKARI-SAN...
SHE AND YOU PROBABLY AREN'T THAT FAR APART IN AGE...
HUUUHH?!

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE ANY PROBLEMS WITH ME ACTUALLY BEING AT REI'S PLACE, RIGHT?!
LIKE. I. SAID.
I'M AT REI'S PLACE.
YOU CAN KEEP SAYING THAT, BUT THE LAST TRAIN'S ALREADY LEFT.
THE MIDDLE SCHOOLER OR THAT THAT OLD LADY—... YOUNG WOMAN...
THEN... WHICH ONE IS IT?!
You're kidding, right?!
IT'S NEITHER! ...And did you say "old lady-..." just now?
WHY DOES IT HAVE TO BE LIKE THAT?!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN WHICH ONE...?
YOU PERV!!!
NO WAY, THEN IT'S THAT KINDER-GARTNER?!
Seriously, just go home!

SFX: PUN SUKA PUN PUN (HMMPH HMPH HMPH)
Geez.
What the hell?
I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND KYOUKO ANYMORE!!
YEAH, ME, TOO.
Great minds think alike, huh, Father...?
Why can't he trust his own daughter?!
HINT You've never done anything to merit being tru... (omitted)
SFX: POOIH (TOSSS)
Rei,
waaahhh
Father said to pass it to you.
SFX: TASSHI (CLACK)
KYOUKO,
WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING TO DO?
FATHER'S WORRIED.
I DON'T KNOW.
DAD JUST DOESN'T GET IT.
"HE'S TAKING CARE OF YOU, SO I SHOULD LIKE TO MEET HIM."
"BRING YOUR BOYFRIEND ALONG", STUFF LIKE THAT.

WHY WOULD YOU PICK SOME-BODY LIKE THAT?
LIKE HELL I'M GOING TO BRING HIM WITH ME!
I DON'T KNOW.
I WISH I KNEW MYSELF.
HE'S 20 YEARS OLDER THAN ME,
HE'S MARRIED,
THE GUY WAS ONCE HIS PUPIL.
—IF I REALLY WERE A WITCH
I WOULDN'T BE HAVING THESE MISERABLE PROBLEMS...
THAT LITTLE RUNT.
HOW DARE SHE CALL SOMEONE A "WITCH."

—Over the course of that night,
the little light of her phone's screen
kept lighting up again and again.
And I just stared
at her pale, lit profile.
The whole room was dyed in blue.
as if the two of us
were in the bottom of
a deep pool of water

It felt like a night whose
"Well, see you later."
In response to those words,
I held my tongue with just a "Yeah."
Even though that day
Click that button,
with those cute
ups and downs

Kyouko and I both...
—Like this,
without anything changing,
without being able to change anything
...unable to become
siblings or strangers...
AH, IT'S FINE, NO PROBLEM.
SORRY, FOR BEING LATE.
WHAT?
DID YOU RUN HERE?

SFX: HOHOH
COME ON IN. NIKAIDOU'S BEEN WAITING IMPATIENTLY FOR YOU.
Heey!! You're here, Kiriyama?!
IT'S BEEN QUITE SOME TIME SINCE I'VE HEARD THAT EXPRESSION. IT REALLY BRINGS BACK MEMORIES.
I GUESS YOU REALLY ARE
STILL A STUDENT.
"CLEAN-UP DUTY".
SORRY, CLEAN-UP DUTY TOOK A WHILE.
I won my last game!!
Which means next term, I'll be in C1 just like you!!
.....

KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN, MAN.
AND YOUR ATTITUDE COULD USE SOME DOWN-SIZING, TOO.
SHIGETA-SAAN, CONGRATU-LATIONS ON REMAINING IN THE SAME CLASS! AH, I'M JUST SO EXCITED! ☆
I KEEP THINKING ABOUT HOW WE'RE GOING TO BE IN THE SAME CLASS SOON! ☆
You really push people's buttons.
WHAT? WHERE DID YOU SEE THAT? WHICH SHOGI CIRCLE DID YOU GET THAT INFO FROM?
I MEAN, IT WAS AN EASY SEASON, SO WHAT?
SFX: KUKU... (GIGGLE...) PUKUKU.. (PFFT..)
Mmm, but, hey,
what's most important is that there's no real bad news.
I've also been confirmed to remain in A-class this term...
A hair's width away...
Hm? What's wrong? Everyone's dabbing their eyes?
Well, you could say I was "a finger's width away",
but the margin was more like just "a hair's width away".
I truly want to congratulate you...
Hearing you say that. Anija. makes it feel so...

I FINALLY CAUGHT UP TO YOU, KIRIYAMA.
I'LL BE LOOKING FORWARD TO GOING HEAD-TO-HEAD WITH YOU.
OKAY, RIVAL?

—As he said that,
YEAH,
I GUESS SO.
the expression on Nikaidou's face was so bright I had to squint my eyes.
This morning's river surface floated across my eyelids.
Next month, I'll turn 18.
I'll be a sophomore who's one year behind.
Without being able to change anything,
a new spring has come again.
Chapter 36 END